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ABSTRACT

This brief document analyzes the goals and indicators provided by states as part of the second round of state Biennial Performance Reports (BPRs) covering the academic years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 as required by the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Review of state (or other federal jurisdiction) BPRs examined: (1) total number of goals; (2) total number of indicators; (3) content areas addressed by goals and indicators; and (4) number and content of goals and indicators that were the same for students both with and without disabilities. An overview of state goals and indicators found a large range in the numbers of both goals and indicators as well as differing understandings of the terms "goal" and "indicator." Out of a total of 223 goals 102 were the same for both students with and without disabilities. Evaluation of the required content areas of assessment, dropouts, and graduation found 55 (of 59) states or other jurisdictions reported at least one goal or indicator relating to each of the three required content areas. Other content areas addressed by some state BPRs included suspension and expulsion, secondary transition, disproportionality, least restrictive environment, personnel, parent involvement, monitoring and compliance, and due process and mediation. A table identifies states with goals and indicators by content area. (DB)

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ED 471 221

Biennial Performance Reports: Goals and Indicators. Quick Turn Around (QTA)

By Eve Muller

September 2002

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Quick Turn Around

Project Forum

QTA – A brief analysis of a critical issue in special

Biennial Performance Reports: Goals and Indicators **September 2002**

Eve Müller

Purpose

The demand for accountability means that the federal government, state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) are increasingly using goals and indicators as a way of measuring educational outcomes and holding schools and educational personnel responsible for student performance. This Quick Turn Around (QTA) provides a brief analysis of the goals and indicators provided by states as a part of the second round of state Biennial Performance Reports (BPRs) covering the academic years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. This analysis was carried out as part of Project FORUM's cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs.

Background & Federal Legislation

According to the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all states are required to develop goals and indicators that (1) are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards established by the state for all children; and (2) address at a minimum the performance of children with disabilities on assessments, dropout rates, and graduation rates (34 CFR §300.137). IDEA further requires that states report every two years to the Secretary and the public on the progress of the state, and of children with disabilities, toward meeting these goals.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) required that state reports on goals and indicators be included as part of a "Biennial Performance Report for Part B." The Biennial Report combines the Education Department Grants Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) requirement of a Performance Report with the newer Part B requirement that states report on the progress of students with disabilities in meeting performance goals and indicators set by states.

The BPR was due for the first time on December 31, 1999. Ahearn (2001) noted that in light of limited guidance, states submitted reports that varied significantly in terms of format, length and content. There were substantial differences among states in terms of the number, type and level of specificity of state goals and indicators for special education.

In an attempt to standardize future BPRs, OSEP solicited extensive input from SEAs and others that resulted in both (1) a new set of guidelines detailed in a memo from OSEP dated January 11, 2002 called the

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"Submission Requirements for the Biennial Performance Report," and (2) a series of forms designed for reporting data relating to the performance of children with disabilities. Goals and indicators were required for the three specific content areas of assessments, graduation and dropouts; and additional supporting data were required on suspensions, expulsions and disproportionality. Additional information on submission requirements for the BPR can be found on OSEP's website.[1] The second BPR – and the source of information for this QTA – was due May 31, 2002.

Methodology

OSEP provided Project FORUM with copies of the 2002 BPRs filed by all 50 states and 9 of the 10 non-state jurisdictions required to submit BPRs.[2] Although the BPR contains specific data on student assessments and other performance areas, this QTA is limited to an analysis of state goals and indicators. The reports were reviewed, and the section containing goals and indicators was analyzed for the following information: (1) total number of goals; (2) total number of indicators; (3) content areas addressed by goals and indicators; and (4) number and content of goals and indicators that were the same for students both with and without disabilities. Following a brief overview of state goals and indicators, this QTA provides a description of the most common types of goals and indicators for both required and optional content areas, as well as a description of goals and indicators that were the same for all students.

[1] http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/Monitoring

[2] The non-state jurisdictions included in this analysis are American Samoa, Bureau of Indian Affairs, District of Columbia, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. For convenience, all 59 entities are referred to as 'states' in this report.

Overview of Goals and Indicators

One requirement under IDEA is that state special education goals be aligned to the extent possible with states' general education goals (34 CFR §300.137). Therefore, since state goals vary greatly, it was not surprising that the number of special education goals and indicators per state varied greatly. The total number of goals per state ranged from one to 11, and the total number of indicators per state ranged from zero to 41. The majority of states and non-state jurisdictions reported between two and four goals, and between three and six indicators.

States also varied in terms of the specificity of their goals and indicators. Some goals were very detailed, including benchmarks for each performance indicator. Other states had more general goals and indicators, especially in those states where goals were the same for students both with and without disabilities. Also, some states included goals and indicators but did not specify the types of educational data that would be used to measure performance.

Significantly, states appeared to have very different understandings of the definitions of the terms "goal" and "indicator," as well as the relationship between the two. Consequently, what was identified as a goal by one state, was frequently identified as an indicator by another. For example, one state had a goal that the "percentage of children with disabilities who are removed from school for disciplinary reasons will not exceed that of non-disabled children," whereas another state had an indicator that sought to "decrease the percentage of students with disabilities expelled or suspended to parity with general education students."

One state used objectives in addition to goals and indicators, and several other states broke indicators down into more than one level of specificity (e.g., Indicator 1 was further divided into Indicator 1A and Indicator 1B).

Thirty-six states indicated that at least some of their goals and indicators were the same for both students with and without disabilities. Out of a total of 223 goals, 102 were the same for all students, and out of a total of 447 indicators, 49 were the same for all students. It appeared that goals were more likely than indicators to be the same for all students, because they were usually more general in nature. For instance, a goal of improved academic performance on state-wide assessments was often the same for all students (e.g., "Increase student participation and performance on the statewide assessments"), whereas the related indicator was tailored to reflect the unique assessment needs of students with disabilities (e.g., "Increase the percentage of special education students participating in the standard administration of the state-wide assessments.")

Content areas which were most likely to be addressed by goals and indicators common to all students included assessment, academic achievement, dropouts, graduation, secondary transition and personnel.

Required Content Areas

As specified by IDEA and clarified in the OSEP Submission Requirements, states' goals and indicators were required at a minimum to address the content areas of assessment, drop outs and graduation. A total of 55 states reported at least one goal or indicator relating to each of the three required content areas. Three of the remaining states included goals or indicators addressing at least two of the three required content areas and one state addressed only one of the required content areas.

Assessment

The highest number of goals and indicators was related to the topic of assessment. Fifty-eight states had at least one goal or indicator referring to this content area, for a total of 48 goals and 120 indicators. See Table 1 for a listing of states' goals and indicators by content area.

A total of 52 states had at least one goal or indicator related to performance on statewide and/or local tests (81 total goals and indicators). Goals and indicators usually called for states to (a) increase the percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding the academic standards for certain subject areas; or (b) reduce the gap in performance between students with and without disabilities.

Forty-two states had assessment goals and indicators relating to participation (54 total goals and indicators). Typically these goals required that states include students with disabilities in general and/or local assessments, with accommodations as needed. Indicators often specified the particular assessment tool to be used.

Eight states had at least one goal or indicator relating to alternate assessments (13 total goals and indicators) – usually specifying that states use alternate assessments at a rate comparable to national data, that students participate in alternate assessments as appropriate, or that students' results in alternate assessments demonstrate improved performance.

Finally, seven states had indicators that specified that children with disabilities' test scores would improve in the areas of literacy and/or math. Three states had indicators that stipulated how assessment data would be collected and reported.

Related to the topic of assessment were a number of indicators having to do with "skill development." For instance, several states had indicators that focused on readiness skills for children preparing to enter kindergarten; literacy and math skills; and skills related to other academic subjects such as science and social studies. Although these indicators did not address performance on formal assessments, they nonetheless stressed pre-academic or academic progress.

Drop Outs

Fifty-eight states had at least one goal or indicator related to drop outs (86 total goals and indicators). These goals and indicators typically called on states to either (a) decrease the numbers of students with disabilities dropping out of school; or (b) reduce the gap in dropout rates between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

Graduation

All but three states had goals or indicators addressing graduation (91 total goals and indicators). Most either called for (a) an increase in graduation rates on the part of students with disabilities, or (b) a reduction in the gap in graduation rates between students with and without disabilities. At least two states had indicators that called on states to collect reliable baseline data in order to better monitor changes in graduation rates over time.

Other Content Areas

Although not required in the statutes, most states included goals and indicators addressing one or more of the following content areas: suspension and expulsion; secondary transition; disproportionality; least restrictive environment (LRE); personnel; parent involvement; due process and mediation; and monitoring and compliance. Several states also addressed additional content areas (see "Other" section below), as well as general themes such as academic achievement and educational opportunity (see "Umbrella Goals" section below).

Suspension and Expulsion

A total of 27 states had at least one goal or indicator addressing suspension and expulsion (40 total goals and indicators). Typical goals and indicators required states to (a) collect quantitative data relating to suspensions and expulsions; (b) determine if discrepancies exist between the rate of suspensions and expulsions of students with and without disabilities; or (c) decrease the percentage of students with disabilities expelled or suspended to parity with general education students.

Secondary Transition

Seventeen states had at least one goal or indicator relating to secondary transition or post-school outcomes (47 total goals and indicators). Most called on states to increase percentages of students (a) receiving one or more of the following services: transition planning; access to a transition program; vocational training; or (b) participating in one or more of the following activities: post-secondary employment; post-secondary education; or post-secondary programs. Additional indicators addressed the need for

personnel training in the area of secondary transition, as well as the need for gathering longitudinal information on post-secondary outcomes.

Disproportionality

A total of 13 states included goals or indicators relating to disproportionality (27 total goals and indicators). All addressed racial disparities in special education, and either called on (a) states to collect data relating to the representation of minorities in special education; or (b) schools to develop corrective action plans to decrease the numbers of minority students receiving special education services. Some states also included more general goals relating to the provision of culturally appropriate services.

Least Restrictive Environment

Thirteen states included goals or indicators relating to LRE (34 total goals and indicators). Most called for (a) a decrease in the percentage of students with disabilities in segregated settings; or (b) an increase in the percentage of students with disabilities served in general education classrooms. One state included a goal that related to the education of incarcerated youth within least restrictive environments and another state included an indicator that emphasized "integration" (e.g., calling on states to increase the amount of time students with disabilities received instruction with their non-disabled peers).

Personnel

Twelve states included goals or indicators addressing the need for adequately prepared personnel (45 total goals and indicators). Several addressed the need for inservice preparation of existing personnel, including special education administrators, general and special education teachers and paraprofessionals.

Other goals and indicators addressed issues relating to certification and licensure – for instance: (a) decreasing the number of school personnel who have emergency or temporary certification; or (b) increasing the number of licensed special education teachers, early intervention personnel and related service personnel.

Several states addressed the need for improved and/or increased pre-service preparation. For example, one state required the development of a set of core competencies for paraprofessionals and another called for an increase in the volume of undergraduate and graduate special education majors.

Finally, several indicators addressed recruitment and retention, calling for either (a) aggressive out-of state recruitment; (b) improvements in inter-state certification reciprocity agreements; and (c) increased retention rates for special educators and related personnel.

Parent Involvement

Seven states included goals or indicators relating to parent involvement (16 total goals and indicators). Four states addressed measures of parent satisfaction, two others addressed training of parents, and two more addressed parent participation in individualized education plans (IEPs) or other aspects of students' education.

Monitoring and Compliance

A total of six states included goals or indicators relating to monitoring and compliance (20 total goals and indicators). They addressed one or more of the

following: (a) the need to decrease the numbers of citations for noncompliance; (b) the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP); or (c) the utilization of monitoring results to inform state personnel preparation.

Due Process and Mediation

Six states included indicators relating to due process, mediation or dispute resolution (10 total indicators). Typical examples included calls for states to (a) reduce the number of due process hearings; (b) increase the use of mediation as a way of resolving conflicts between parents and school personnel; and (c) implement an effective complaint resolution process to resolve disputes in an effective and timely manner.

Other Content Areas

Other content areas addressed by one or more states included access to the general education curriculum, behavior, early childhood transition, identification of children with disabilities, IEP goals, interagency collaboration, meaningful participation, mental health and counseling services, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Umbrella Goals

Thirty-two states listed one or more "umbrella" goals (36 total goals). Several states also listed one or more umbrella *indicators* (i.e., indicators covering a very broad content area), bringing the total number of states with either umbrella goals or indicators to 35. Umbrella goals were very general and tended to be used by states as an umbrella for one or more indicators addressing specific content areas. Goals broadly addressed academic achievement, general supervision, learning environment, or school level evaluation. Most goals called for the improved educational achievement of students with disabilities. However, one state called for the effective supervision of the implementation of IDEA, one called for creating an optimal environment for teaching and learning, and another called for the assessment of each school building to ensure that students with disabilities received fair and appropriate instruction.

Concluding Remarks

The OSEP Submission Requirements seem to have played a significant role in terms of helping states move toward submissions that are more standardized in format and content. However, there is still no consensus among states as to the definition of goals and indicators. Because there was no consistent understanding of the terms, states used the terms in dissimilar ways. OSEP may want to explore with states the possibility of developing a more uniform understanding of the meaning of these terms for future revisions to goals and indicators. However, as long as states are required to align goals and indicators for special education with those for general education, it may not be realistic to expect states to adopt uniform definitions of goals and indicators.

It is unclear from the BPRs how many states will be using the documents as a way of evaluating progress in an ongoing way, as opposed to only meeting OSEP reporting requirements. A number of states developed very detailed BPRs addressing a wide range of special education issues and seemed to intend that the BPR be used as a way of evaluating overall changes in state and/or district performance. Several other states seemed to use the BPR as a way of monitoring compliance issues and additional states appeared to be linking special education goals with other general education

goals. The fact that so many goals and indicators went beyond the required range of content areas suggests that states are using the BPR as a way of examining their own needs.

This analysis of the BPR goals and indicators is one of several BPR analyses being conducted by OSEP-funded projects. For example, the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) is completing an analysis of the assessment information and Westat is completing an analysis of the graduation and dropout data. There are also preliminary plans in place to conduct analysis of suspension/expulsion and disproportionality data. The purpose of these and future analyses is to make the BPR process more meaningful for states and the data more useful for improving results for children and youth with disabilities.

Ahearn, E.M. (2001). *Perfomance Goals and Indicators*. Alexandria, VA: Project FORUM at NASDSE.

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Table 1
BPR Goals and Indicators Chart (N=59)

Content Area	States with at least one goal or indicator	Total # of states
Assessment	AL, AK, AS, AZ, AR, BIA, CA, CNMI, CO, CT, DE, DC, FL, GA, GU, HI, IL, IN, KY, IA, KS, LA, ME, MD, MH, MA, MI, FM, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PW, PA, PR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, VI, WA, WV, WI, WY	58
Drop Outs[3]	AL, AK, AS, AZ, AR, BIA, CA, CNMI, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, GU, HI, IL, IN, IA, ID, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MH, MA, MI, FM, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PW, PA, PR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, VI, WA, WV, WI, WY	58
Graduation[4]	AL, AK, AS, AZ, AR, BIA, CA, CNMI, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, GU, HI, IL, IN, IA, ID, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MH, MA, MI, FM, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PW, PA, RI, SC, SD, TX, UT, VT, VA, VI, WA, WV, WI, WY	56
Suspension and Expulsion	AL, AK, AZ, BIA, CA, CO, CN, DE, GA, ID, IN, IA, ME, MI, MH, MS, MT, NH, NJ, OK, PA, RI, TX, VI, WA, WV, WY	27
Secondary Transition	AL, AK, BIA, CO, GA, HI, ID, KY, MA, MO, MT, NY, ND, PA, PW, WA, WV	17
Disproportionality	AL, AK, CA, GA, IN, MN, MS, NJ, OK, PA, RI, TX, UT	13
LRE	AL, BIA, CA, DE, GA, LA, MH, MN, NY, ND, PW, PA, UT	13
Personnel	AL, BIA, CA, CO, HI, ID, MN, ND, PW, PA, VI, WA	12
Parent Involvement	AL, AZ, CO, MN, MT, PA, WA	7
Monitoring and Compliance	AL, CO, HI, MN, PA, WA	6
Due Process and Mediation	CO, HI, MN, MT, PA, WA	6
Umbrella Goals	Academic Achievement (AZ, AK, BIA, CA, CO, DE, DC, FL, GA, GU, HI, IA, KS, KY, CNMI, MI, MN, MO, MT, NC, ND, OK, OR, PW, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, VT, VI, WA, WV) Academic Opportunity (VI) Academic Participation (MT) Educational Opportunity (NY) General Supervision (AL) School Level Evaluation (DC)	35
Other Content Areas	Access to General Education Curriculum (CO, MA, TN) Behavior (CO, DE, PA) Early Childhood Transition (AL, MN, MS, PA) Identification of Children with Disabilities (CNMI, CO, MN, TN) IEP Goals (CO) Interagency Collaboration (MN, PA) Meaningful Participation (CO) Mental Health and Counseling Services (MA, MN) Stakeholder Satisfaction (CO, MT)	10

[3] DC is not listed in this group although DC's BPR indicates that it plans to use the findings of its assessment to address drop out rate.

[4] DC is not listed in this group although DC's BPR indicates that it plans to use the findings of its assessment to address graduation rate. Also, Tennessee is not listed in this group because, although there is a BPR goal titled "Graduation Rates," the BPR states that Tennessee does not have a specific goal relating to the percentage of students graduating per year.

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